

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /058 W

----- 003851

R 091935Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9114

INFO DOD DIA WASHDC

USCINCSO

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USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MILT

SUBJECT: GOA EXECUTIVE BRANCH PROPOSES REFORM OF DEFENSE LAW

REF: A. BA 8870, B. IR 6 804 0459 74

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH DEC 5 ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD ADD TO THE AGENDA OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF CONGRESS SLATED TO BEGIN NEXT WEEK (SEE REFTEL), A DRAFT LAW DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS: DEFENSE, INTERNAL SECURITY, AND INTELLIGENCE.

2. THE INTERNAL SECURITY FEATURES OF THE LAW EMBODY CONCEPTS FOR A SECURITY COMMITTEE THAT HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN POLITICAL AND MILITARY CIRCLES FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. THE EARLIER ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A SECURITY COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH TERRORISM APPARENTLY FOUNDERED BECAUSE OF THE OPPOSITION OF LOPEZ REGA, WHO REPORTEDLY DID NOT WANT TO SEE SO POWERFUL A BODY ESTABLISHED INDEPENDENT OF HIS CONTROL. AS PRESENTLY ENVISAGED, THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE CHAIRED BY MRS PERON, RATHER THAN A MILITARY MAN, THUS APPARENTLY OVERCOMING LOPEZ REGA'S OBJECTIONS (AND ALSO PUTTING TO REST

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RUMORS THAT A NEW SECURITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE MIGHT BE

CHAired BY RAUL LACABANNE, THE RIGHT WING FEDERAL INTERVENTOR IN CORDOBA). GIVEN THE FRUSTRATION OF EARLIER ATTEMPTS TO SET UP AN INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE FOR SECURITY, AN OPERATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF SORTS WAS SET UP WITHIN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY (SEE IR 6 804 0459 74). THE LATEST VERSION, AS PRESENTED IN THE DRAFT LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, ENVISAGES A MUCH BROADER AND HIGHLEVEL BODY WITH INTERAGENCY COORDINATING FUNCTION. THE DRAFT INTERNAL SECURITY LAW WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROVOKE LIVELY POLITICAL DEBATE AND WILL BE SUBJECT OF EMBASSY ANALYSIS SEPTTEL.

3. THE DEFENSE PORTION OF THE LAW APPEARS ON ITS FACE TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO EMBODY GREATER MANAGEMENT CONTROLS OVER MATERIAL PROCUREMENT, R&D EFFORTS, AND AMINISTRATIVE DUPLICATION WHICH PRESENTLY CHARACTERIZE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES. THE LAW WOULD ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMAND SIMILAR TO US JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF SYSTEM THAT WOULD, IN TURN, REPORT TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE. THIS MECHANISM WOULD PRESUMABLY SERVE TO RATIONALIZE PRESENT MILIARY ACTIVITIES IN AREAS OUTLINED ABOVE. IF CARRIED OUT IN SPIRIT OF DRAFT LAW WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY RESTRICT SCOPE FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTION THREE SERVICES NOW POSSESS THUS, IT WILL MEET WITH SOME RESISTANCE FROM SENIOR OFFICIALS. BEYOND THIS, IT DOESN'T APPEAR AT THIS POINT THAT DRAFT LAW HAS ANY OTHER POLITICAL OBJECTIVES AND THUS WILL BE LEAST CONTROVERSIAL PORTION OF NEW LEGISLATION RECOMMENDED TO CONGRESS.

4. COMMENT. SOME TIME AGO, EMBASSY, AT REQUEST OF SENATOR EDUARDO PAZ, CHAIRMAN OF SENATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, PROVIDED COPIES OF US LAW ESTABLISHING DOD. AT THAT TIME, PAZ NOTED THAT GOA DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT WISHED TO STUDY US LAW TO ADAPT TO ARGENTINE CONDITIONS MANAGEMENT CONTROLS WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR ARGENTINE MOD TO PROCURE EQUIPMENT TO CARRY ON RESEARCH AND OTHER MILITARY-RELATED ACTIVITIES AT LOWER COST. FROM DRAFT LAW IT APPEARS THAT THIS IS NOW BEING DONE. WHETHER IF PASSED, LAW WILL, INDEED, BRING GREATER MANAGERIAL EFFICIENCY TO ARGENTINE MOD, OF COURSE, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. EMBASSY POUCHING FULL TEXT OF LAW ARA/AUP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, MEETING AGENDA, LAW, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUENOS08925
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740357-0300
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741251/aaaabriw.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. BA 8870, B. IR 6 804 0459 74
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOA EXECUTIVE BRANCH PROPOSES REFORM OF DEFENSE LAW
TAGS: PINT, PGOV
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005